

REMARKS

Claims 32-33 were rejected. Claim 33 is amended. Claims 32-33 are now pending. The above amendments and the following remarks are considered by Applicants to overcome each rejection raised by the Examiner and to place the application in condition for allowance.

The Examiner rejected claims 32-33 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Smith, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,632,061) (“Smith) in view of Adams, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,976) (“Adams”). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections for the following reasons.

Regarding independent claim 32, the Examiner contends that Smith discloses a “*holding part being formed by holding elements* which project in a flexible manner from the body part in the direction of its outer surface.” Specifically, the Examiner contends that Smith’s locking member 32 is a holding part and Smith’s lower surface 31 is a holding element. (Current Office Action at 3.) But claim 32 requires that the holding part be formed by “*holding elements*”—that is, by *more than one* holding element. Even if Smith’s lower surface 31 is considered a holding element, it is only one holding element. Smith’s purported holding part (locking member 32) has only one purported holding element (lower surface 31), and therefore Smith cannot disclose a “holding part being formed by holding elements.”

Regarding dependent claim 33, Applicants have amended the claim to further clarify the claimed subject matter. The Examiner contends that Smith discloses two holding elements for the opening of the thin wall. (Current Office Action at 4.) This is incorrect. Even if Smith’s lower surface 31 is considered a holding element, Smith, at most, discloses holding elements for *two separate* openings (apertures 14 and 15 of Figure 1). Smith does not two holding elements for each of its two openings (which would require four total holding elements). Thus, Smith does not disclose “two holding elements for the opening of the thin wall”

The use of two holding elements provides an advantage over the prior art because, at short distances, the symmetry of the (spring-induced) forces cancel one another in the one opening. In Smith, the long handle 12 is between the opposite locking members 30, 32 and positioned in two openings 14, 15 having a long distance to one another.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that it would not have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to arrive at the invention of independent claim 32 or dependent claim 33. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection.

An early action on the merits of these claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



Eugene LeDonne - Reg. No. 35,930
Joseph Miller, III - Reg. No. 61,748

REED SMITH LLP
599 Lexington Avenue
29th Floor
New York, NY 10022
(P) 212-521-5400
Attorney for Applicant